S.No.	Item	Target 1998-99		
		NE	Assam	Total
1.	Switching Capacity	452000	68000	113200
2.	DELs	32000	50000	82000
3.	Village Public Telephone (VPTs)	1000	2900	3900
4.	Microwave UHF Systems (RKMs)	330	831	1161
5.	Satellite Earth Stations	15	Nil	15

Recommendations of TRAI Regarding Telephone Charges

532. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has recommended hefty hike in telephone rental charges and local calls while proposing reduction in international calls;

(b) if so, the details of the recommendations made by TRAI alongwith justification, their impact and implications and other related matters as per working paper;

(c) the details of action taken/proposed to be taken thereon; and

(d) the details of estimated additional revenue likely to be collected by Government as a result of the proposed hike with State-wise break-up in general and Maharashtra State in particular?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) The TRAI formed under the TRAI Act, 1997 has brought out a Consultation paper on Telecom Pricing suggesting inter-alia increase in rental and reduction in long distance tariff for rebalancing the tariff based on costs.

(b) to (d) The proposals of TRAI summarised at Annexure [*See* appendix 185, Annexure No. 13] are at present being discussed by TRAI with Service providers, various Consumer Organisations and general public for their response. applications of these proposals

Action Plan for Reliable and Efficient Postal Communication

533. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the postal department has drawn up an action plan to become self sufficient and generate surplus resources through innovative schemes and create a reliable and efficient postal communication;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the agenda of major problems discussed in the recent conference of Chief Post Masters and decision taken thereon;

(d) what is the action taken report on the recommendations of Talwar Committees; and

(e) the details of major achievements during the Eighth Plan period and major programme proposed during the current year and Ninth Plan, particularly for Maharashtra State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) and (b) For generating additional resources for the department some Premium products/Services like Speed Post, Business Post, Commercial Publicity and Express Post are already in operation. Steps are being taken to further upgrade these services with a view to improving market share and providing better service to the customers. An Action Plan has also been drawn up to introduce in a phased manner some new products and services like, Greeting Post,

Database Service and relaunch Express Parcel Post and Indian Postal Order to generate more revenue. The raising of additional resources through commercial publicity on postal stationery and postal buildings is also being envisaged.

(c) The Conference of Chief Postmasters General was convened in Delhi on 04.09.98. It held wide ranging and meaningful discussions on the report of Justice Talwar Committee on ED agents, National Postal Policy, Citizens' Charter, Generation of Resources and Augmentation of Preventive Vigilance Machinery. These discussions provided useful inputs for improving the quality of various postal services.

(d) Justice Talwar Committee recommendations are under active consideration of the Government.

(e) The details of major achievements during the 8th Plan period is at Annex 'A'. The 8th Plan achievements of Maharashtra Circle is at Annex 'B' Major programmes proposed during the current year and 9th Plan are at Annex 'C' and 'D' respectively. At Annex 'E' are the 9th Plan and Annual Plan programmes proposed for Maharashtra Circle. [*see* Appendix 185, Annexure 14]

National Postal Policy

534. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the formulation of a National Postal Policy undertaken in 1992 has since been completed;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) to (c) In 1992, action was initiated to draft a National Postal Policy but the matter did not progress further thereafter. During 1997, a draft National Postal Policy was prepared and submitted for consideration of the Consultative Committee of Parliament for the Ministry of Communications in its meeting held on 20.8.97. However, discussions remained inconclusive as in the meanwhile the Lok Sabha was dissolved. Keeping in view the rapid socio-economic development and all pervasive technological advances in the communication sector and increasing pressure for faster and more efficient service and to offer value added services especially tailor made for identified customer segments, the draft National Postal Policy has been further modified and is at present under active consideration.

Harassment of Small Investors in Post Offices

535. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to an article that appeared in India Today on page 71 dated 9th November, 1998 under the caption "Safe deposits, despite red tape, saving in post office schemes is the best bet for small investors";

(b) what is the amount in such deposits as on 30th November, 1998;

(c) whether Government are aware that investors many of them poor and illiterate persons in villages and small towns face harassment due to clumsy and out-dated procedures for withdrawing money; and

(d) if so, whether Government propose to streamline procedures so that depositors are saved from harassment at Post offices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The amount of total money in all such deposits (small savings schemes and savings certificates put together) as on 30th September, 1998 is Rs. 13,81,62.17 crores only.